

1 DC: We're here in San Fernando and it's December 4. I'm here talking
2 to Rudy Senior at the Tataviam travel offices. We're going to talk
3 about the history of Tataviam related to the research on
4 recognition. The thing that we talked about the other day that was
5 really intriguing to me and that was really interesting was, as we
6 were just talking, you didn't identify the specific organization, but
7 you indicated that in the thirties when you were a kid, that you
8 attended some of the meetings. And that there were already a
9 tribal council, a Senate. Can you possibly remember any of that
10 stuff? And that continues today.

11 ROS: Only just kind of basic a little bit.

12 DC: So you weren't that into it at that time? You were just too young.

13 ROS: No. I was still small.

14 DC: But to your knowledge, that was an ongoing thing.

15 ROS: Oh yes. And then there was like a fiesta. I enjoyed going and
16 watching it.

17 DC: Did the Senate take some role in organizing the fiestas?

18 ROS: They organized some of those fiestas, they called it. So the
19 families would go down there to see the fiestas. And the church
20 would do a lot of it too.

21 DC: The fiestas were held every year, annually.

22 ROS: Well, the church would have about once a month, would have
23 one. And they always have a group of Indians come from out of
24 town to do some dancing and so forth. That's where we used to
25 go see them. I just don't remember the tribe names right now.

26 DC: So many of those people coming in weren't really Tataviam folks?

27 ROS: No. The ones that lived there were. We used to go see it.

28 DC: What's your relationship to the church at this time? Do you

1 remember? Because you have your own organization.

2 ROS: No. At that time, I didn't go to church. I just go to the fiestas that
3 they had out in the open.

4 DC: So was that the same with many of the community members?
5 Some of them went to church, some didn't.

6 ROS: Yes. And they go to the fiesta that they had.

7 DC: So this organization, with the Senate, and what did they call them
8 back then? Did they call them chief or captain in those days still?

9 ROS: I don't remember because I was small.

10 DC: Do you remember the relationship the organization had to the
11 church? It appeared to be on some kind of like....

12 ROS: No. Like I said, I was small then, but I remember all these things
13 that were going on and we used to go and see it. But no, I really
14 don't know. I was still small. But I enjoyed going out there and
15 seeing them perform and so forth. But at that time, no, I don't
16 remember too much.

17 DC: Did you think of that as specifically a Tataviam event? Or was it a
18 pan-Indian event?

19 ROS: I think it was a pan-Indian event because our people would go and
20 see it. Because most of our people lived in San Fernando and
21 we'd come over and see the fiestas. The word was spread by
22 mouth all over to our people. And then we had our own fiestas.
23 Like we had the weddings. We had showers. We had birthday
24 parties and we had big birthday parties that we invited a lot of our
25 people to come down to the party. We had music and dancing,
26 food. It was just a big blowup with our families.

27 DC: How did people understand the community in those days?
28 There's just multiple families or there's inter-related families? How

1 would you understand who was in the group, who wasn't? Was
2 this exclusively for the Tataviam folks? Or it was private.
3 ROS: Yeah, it was really exclusive for our people, our Native American
4 people. They would send invitations to them.
5 DC: So they sent invitations to everyone in the Tataviam group? Or
6 other Indians too?
7 ROS: No. Just to our tribe.
8 DC: What's the rationale for that? What was the reason for just the
9 tribal members?
10 ROS: Well, they figured the other members didn't live close there and
11 they wouldn't come down. And a lot of times they would send
12 invitations out but it was just a waste of money sending cards out
13 to come down.
14 DC: To Tataviam folks that had moved away?
15 ROS: Yeah. So they wouldn't come down at all.
16 DC: So as a kid you remember all these events and stuff? They were
17 regular events.
18 ROS: Oh yeah. I used to go to those events all the time. I enjoyed
19 them. I'd tell my mother, "I want to go to this event." When I was
20 going to school, back when I was five, six years old, and I was
21 going to school, then the teacher they had these plays they put
22 up. So the teachers put these plays up and we had to go to the
23 play, the auditorium, for the other children in the school grounds
24 there. So they put me to drum, a little drum. I was about seven
25 years old, close to eight. I used to get mad at the teacher. "I'm no
26 Indian. What you got me drumming?" So I was mad and I went to
27 my mother after school.
28 DC: But she had already identified you as an Indian kid. So that's that.

1 She knew your family.

2 ROS: Yeah. I was mad. And she said, "Why are you mad?" "Well,
3 because they put me down there in the auditorium to drum with a
4 little drum. They think I'm an Indian." She said, "Well, you are
5 Indian. You ask your dad." "Well, what kind of Indian?" "You ask
6 your dad and he'll tell you." So from there on, my blood started
7 boiling as an Indian kid. And I started growing up. So when I
8 went to work for the Veterans' Hospital at 17 years old as a
9 nursing assistant, I had some of my patients that were tired of
10 laying in bed and doing nothing. And I said, "Well, you want
11 something to do?" He said, "Yeah." I said, "Well, here are some
12 names. Go the library there and see if you can find these names
13 and see where they were born." "Okay." So I had them doing
14 kind of a genealogy. They didn't know. But they enjoyed it.

15 DC: It's something to do.

16 ROS: They'd come down. "No, I didn't find nothing. But we're going to
17 go tomorrow again. We like it." So I had them doing that for a
18 while. Or I had them cutting some paper clippings from the
19 newspaper if some event came up or something. Like I have
20 papers there from other tribes now.

21 DC: Did your dad and mom and relatives talk about these festivals and
22 these events that went on for a long time?

23 ROS: Yeah. They would go to them. They would go, because they
24 wouldn't let us go alone. They'd take us, because we'd bug them
25 that we wanted to go. So they'd take us to those events. But a lot
26 of times they couldn't do it because they were busy doing
27 something. We cried and then it was over with. And the next time
28 we asked our parents to promise they would take us. They said

1 okay. So they would take us to the fiestas all the time.

2 DC: Who would organize these events sometimes? It would depend?

3 ROS: Sometimes the church would do the events.

4 DC: For some of the festivals. But some of the community events,
5 how were they organized? Members of the community would do
6 them.

7 ROS: The community, they would with the church would make the
8 events.

9 DC: So the tribe has, of course, a long relationship with the church and
10 stuff. Or did that sort of stop about 1834? Do you have any...?

11 ROS: Actually, it stopped in the forties.

12 DC: Eighteen-forties?

13 ROS: Forties it stopped. And then I started doing some genealogy for
14 my people. They didn't know when I started doing it. Because I
15 myself was Indian, so my blood was boiling then.

16 DC: So you're saying that when you were a kid, the church was
17 organizing events. People actually went to them.

18 ROS: Yeah. They were the ones organizing them.

19 DC: And then the others, just Tataviam events, but these were mostly
20 the weddings and things like that. But then in the forties, the
21 church seemed to fade away from the community.

22 ROS: They kind of faded away on the fiestas.

23 DC: So you started to organize your own events.

24 ROS: Then we started organizing ours. Then I started doing my
25 genealogy. I started getting my people together. Then the war
26 broke out. Then I was taken into the service. So then all that
27 stopped from '41 to '48, '49, when I was discharged.

28 DC: Did people start those events again in '45, '46?

1 ROS: No. Well, the church started a couple of them up in North
2 Hollywood.

3 DC: How about the community?

4 ROS: But the community, no, they didn't start nothing up until I had my
5 people come back after I got out of the service.

6 DC: A lot of people had to come out of the service. A lot of people
7 were gone.

8 ROS: Yeah, they started coming back and so we started doing all that.
9 And then we started having our meetings at the Mission Park, with
10 a potluck dinner. And then my children started dancing. They
11 wanted it. They said, "Dad, I know how to dance." I said, "No,
12 you don't. We're having a meeting here." "Dad, but I know how to
13 dance." "Okay. Show us then." And my oldest boy would drum a
14 little bit and then my youngest kid would dance. And all of the
15 people were just astonished to see. So from there on, we formed
16 a dancing group and doing parades a lot. And we went clear
17 down to Oceanside for a parade.

18 DC: What did you guys call yourselves? In the thirties, if you
19 remember anything, tell me a little bit about the leadership and the
20 Senate. What did the Senate do? Do you remember anybody
21 that was on the Senate or anything back in those days?

22 ROS: No, I really don't remember much about that.

23 DC: Because it was quite a long time ago, huh?

24 ROS: Yeah. Because my grandfather died in '42 or '44.

25 DC: But he was also active as a captain or as a senator then.

26 ROS: No. He was already really ill.

27 DC: By that time. But at that time you remember him.

28 ROS: Oh yeah. Because I used to take him to my dad's house. My

1 mother would say, "Rudy. Go get your grandpa and bring him
2 down because your dad wants him to have supper with us." He
3 was senile already so I went out and brought him in. But he never
4 spoke to us in our language, Tataviam. Now I know why in those
5 days because my mother used to tell us. "Remember you're
6 going to school. Nothing but English." Because we used to get
7 punished.

8 DC: But you used to speak at home.

9 ROS: At home we'd speak Spanish because my mother would speak
10 Spanish to us and my dad would speak English to us. So that's
11 how we got both languages together. But my grandfather never
12 spoke our Indian language at all.

13 DC: But he knew it.

14 ROS: Oh yes, he was fluent. Very fluent, too. But he never uttered one
15 word.

16 DC: Really? Wow. And he wouldn't teach any.

17 ROS: He died with all his experience of the learning the language that
18 he knew. I think there was only three Indians in San Fernando
19 that knew the language.

20 DC: At that time.

21 ROS: At that time.

22 DC: Did your father ever talk about your grandfather, the things that he
23 did and things like that?

24 ROS: No. My father never did. You know, that's the funny part of it. No
25 Tataviam people here ever talk about the past of their families or
26 what they did. I don't know. Maybe because they were afraid that
27 the white people will punish them if they did something. And they
28 didn't want nobody to do anything. Now, you get these grants in

1 school to teach them their heritage. What for? They've lost
2 everything already. They can't bring it back up. As it is, it's hard
3 for us to do some of that now. But we do a little bit. We get going
4 little by little. But we kind of depend on other people or families
5 that would think something about it, to remember something. It's
6 a very, very slim chance.

7 DC: Tell me about the Senate and the organization. You didn't really
8 invent that. That was something that had been going on before.
9 You just sort of revived it.

10 ROS: Yes.

11 DC: And there were people when you started doing that in the forties
12 that had served before as Senators?

13 ROS: No. When I formed the group, they were all people of my age, 18,
14 19, twenties.

15 DC: So younger people.

16 ROS: And thirties. Yeah.

17 DC: What were the old people doing then? Did they have any interest
18 in this anymore?

19 ROS: No. They would just sit back in the rocking chair, a lot of them.
20 They were up in their age already. But they encouraged their
21 children to go.

22 DC: They encouraged people to participate.

23 ROS: Yeah. Get into it. Go. I want you to go. But they themselves,
24 they didn't have the energy any more, I guess.

25 DC: They were very old people.

26 ROS: Can you imagine the forties when I was about 20 and they were
27 old? Now, I'll be 81 next week. December 12 I'll be 81 and I'll be
28 on vacation. My children say, "Dad, you go on vacation and it's

1 your birthday. You're going to be gone on your birthday." I said,
2 "Yeah, what can we do?" But that's the way life is. But now I've
3 formed my people back together and we had our meetings, we
4 had a Senate board we created ourselves.

5 DC: Has that got any relationship to the ones in the thirties? The
6 Senate? Or is that something you did? Where did that word
7 come from—the Senate? That was a long tradition already? Did
8 you have documents from the previous thirties and forties about
9 how to create the Senate and stuff like that?

10 ROS: No. But I had a list of the Senate and a list of our people that
11 used to go to our meetings. And minutes.

12 DC: Before the forties?

13 ROS: Well, in the forties.

14 DC: In the forties. You had a list of the Senate in the forties?

15 ROS: Yeah. But I don't know where it's at. That's what I was going
16 through right here. And I think I seen one at the house.

17 DC: If there were lists of senators and captains in the twenties, thirties,
18 and forties, who would have that stuff?

19 ROS: I would have it.

20 DC: But before the forties, you have that? You have the tribal records.

21 ROS: Yes.

22 DC: But dating back to 1900, 1920, and 1930.

23 ROS: No. I wouldn't have none of that.

24 DC: Would anyone?

25 ROS: Nobody has anything like that

26 DC: That's really critical evidence for us.

27 ROS: Yeah, when I was doing my research, I asked my people for
28 documents, anything they had. Nobody had nothing. As it is,

1 pictures we had is from own families way back in the 1800s. But
2 you'll find them in that box down there. Papers I have because I
3 used to clip them up. Between the sixties and the seventies, I
4 was with the County offices in Pacoima. They had an office there.
5 The director there, I went over and talked to him if we could have
6 an office there under my organization. He said yeah. So I had an
7 office and three phones. They used to give me paper and a
8 typewriter and phone and everything.

9 DC: So you have some documentations of that? Letters you
10 exchanged with them and stuff like that, or just records of some
11 things and stuff. Because that's good. One of the criteria is
12 external recognition.

13 ROS: I did have some papers because the County, back in those days,
14 if you recall, the County, every summer, they had put these
15 children to work during the summertime.

16 DC: Right, right.

17 ROS: I had a group. I used to get 30 to 60 children to work for us, for
18 the organization. Actually, they were given to me to put them to
19 work. And we would monitor them. We would send them out in
20 the community to work on the elderly homes and the backyard.
21 The girls would wash the windows and clean the house for them,
22 the elderlies. We sent them out there. And then the County
23 would send us the checks to give the children their checks every
24 two weeks. And then at the end of the semester, at the end of the
25 summer, between three or four organizations, we formed a trip.
26 We took them to Catalina Islands. Over 500 children we took.
27 And we had volunteer parents to help us out with the children to
28 take care of them. And we took them down there for the whole

1 day.

2 DC: What was the name of this organization in Pacoima?

3 ROS: It was the County Social Services on Van Nuys Boulevard.

4 DC: And you were working for them?

5 ROS: No, no. I was a volunteer. I volunteered for my people. I never
6 got paid up to this day. I never got a penny. Because I was the
7 captain, I'm the chief, and I wasn't allowed to get paid. And my
8 people that I had working for me, as secretary and monitors,
9 whatever, they never got paid either until about two months after
10 we started. Then they started giving me money to give them. But
11 I couldn't touch any of that money.

12 DC: So the County Social Services, they subcontracted to you, or they
13 worked with you.

14 ROS: Yeah.

15 DC: But they worked with you as a tribe?

16 ROS: As a tribe.

17 DC: What did you call yourself then at that time?

18 ROS: It was the Inter-Tribal. Well, actually, that was the non-profit.

19 DC: That was the non-profit.

20 ROS: Yeah. Inter-Tribal from the Mission Indians.

21 DC: Okay. So that was an inter-tribal organization.

22 ROS: Yeah. I used to go to L.A. for the meetings for that.

23 DC: What was the name of that organization? Do you remember?
24 The Indian Coalition, what was the name of that?

25 ROS: No. It was the County.

26 DC: Oh, the County had organized all that.

27 ROS: Yeah, it was under them. They supplied the money for it. And
28 then we'd get children if they wanted to work, and get their names

1 and their address and everything, and we'd submit it to them. And
2 then they would give me so many of those children to work with,
3 because they lived here in the community. And then we'd put
4 them to work. And then they would come out and monitor us
5 because we'd be monitoring the children. So they come and
6 check on us.

7 DC: Right.

8 ROS: But I don't know if I have any records. I did save a lot of records,
9 but when I moved from San Fernando to Palmdale, I gave the
10 house to my son here. And I had a lot of stuff in the garage. And
11 when he sold the house, him and Lisa, my daughter, went in there
12 and they started throwing papers and everything.

13 DC: Throwing the stuff the away.

14 ROS: I said, "What are you doing?" They said, "You don't need this.
15 You don't need that. You don't need it." And they started
16 throwing things away. And they threw a lot of valuable papers
17 away. My wife said, "Yeah, get rid of it." I said, "What do you
18 mean get rid of it? Now? See what you did." "I didn't do nothing."
19 "Yeah, you told the kids to go throw this and throw that away.
20 Which I need now." "Yeah, I know. I'm sorry. I didn't think you'd
21 ever use it." I say, "You never know."

22 DC: Yeah. It's hard to save sometimes.

23 ROS: And I used to save a lot. I used to have papers when I first started
24 the office there in Pacoima, one with the Social Services, Welfare
25 Social Service they used to call it.

26 DC: Tell me again. Let's go back to the Senate and stuff. Tell me how
27 that is organized. When you started to revive that stuff, that was
28 elected offices? Or how did that all work?

1 ROS: Yeah. Actually, my people elected the officers and they didn't
2 decline anyone if they didn't want to.

3 DC: So some people did say no.

4 ROS: They always do. There's a lot of them they don't want to get
5 involved in it. They think it's too hard and it's a lot of work. But
6 they don't know that it's for their own people. But, yeah, we had
7 elections for that. And then the Board elected three people to be
8 on the Board, a separate board for the scholarships.

9 DC: Oh, so you've been doing the scholarships for a long time.

10 ROS: Oh yeah, because we had a fireworks stand. We sold fireworks.
11 That's why we had to file a 501.

12 DC: And it's exclusively for Tataviam students.

13 ROS: Yeah. Well, most of them that came were Tataviam students.
14 Actually, most of them were sent from the high school to us. So
15 they would meet with the three board members and they would
16 talk to them and give them a scholarship at their graduation.

17 DC: So you've been doing this fundraising for quite some time now.

18 ROS: Yeah, as long as we had the fireworks stands in San Fernando
19 before they stopped doing it, we used to sell fireworks. We used
20 to raise ten to fifteen thousand dollars after we paid off the
21 fireworks.

22 DC: You had what you called the Senate Board. The Senators, what
23 would they do? You would do a meeting every once in a while.
24 They would discuss kinds of issues.

25 ROS: Oh, they would meet once a month.

26 DC: Once a month.

27 ROS: Yeah.

28 DC: And they still do that?

1 ROS: What's that?

2 DC: Do they still do that?

3 ROS: Oh yeah. This Board here, the Senate Board meet and so does
4 Pukúu meet.

5 DC: Whose idea was it to set this kind of board thing up? What was
6 the rationale for it? Why did people decide to do that?

7 ROS: Well, you know, actually, I don't know if it was my idea because I
8 told my people you're letting me do all the work. I used to put up
9 the pow-wows myself. I couldn't get no help. Most of them
10 worked. So I set up the pow-wow. I set up a big pow-wow at
11 Devonshire Downs.

12 DC: Where did you put it?

13 ROS: Devonshire Downs, Northridge. That was the biggest I ever had.

14 DC: Did you do that every year? Annual?

15 ROS: No. I did that that one year.

16 DC: What year was that?

17 ROS: That was in the seventies. My cousin, the one that passed on,
18 she signed the paperwork for the Devonshire Downs. She was on
19 the Board. I set up everything. I don't know if you knew (b) (6)
20 [REDACTED].

21 DC: No.

22 ROS: He owned the Appaloosa horses. He did shows. And we had
23 him. We contacted him. Then we had booths in there.

24 DC: So what kind of dancing did you do? Did you do inter-tribal
25 dancing?

26 ROS: Inter-tribal dancing and then they had the show for the horses.
27 Then we had people, like the Navajo came down and they put up
28 an ice cream parlor there in one of the booths. We sold a lot of

1 stuff. So we made money there. Devonshire was owned by
2 Northridge College, UCLA. They owned it. I don't know if they
3 still own it or not.

4 DC: Was that a fundraiser for you? For the scholarship?

5 ROS: That was a fundraiser. Yeah.

6 DC: But you decided not to do that again.

7 ROS: No. Because it was too....

8 DC: A lot of work.

9 ROS: For me alone to do it. And then I did a small pow-wow down here
10 in Pacoima at one of the senator's offices there in Pacoima, on
11 Van Nuys Boulevard and Glenoaks. He already passed on. I did
12 a pow-wow there by myself, but it was a small one. And we had
13 some dancers come in from L.A. I contacted them. I contacted
14 the drummer, the singers and they did a little welcoming opening
15 ceremony and they sang and they danced. So people enjoyed it
16 here. They really enjoyed it. They said they wanted to know
17 when we were going to have another one. I said it's too much for
18 me. Then we had another one way down here at Balboa Park. I
19 think that was the last one we had at Balboa Park.

20 DC: When was that about?

21 ROS: That was lately. That was in the nineties. Ninety-seven I think it
22 was, '98. That was the last one we had. And I've been pushing
23 Rudy to get one down here. So he starts, "Yeah, we're gonna
24 have one, dad. We're gonna have one." But then it drops off
25 because then he's working on the federal recognition and he says,
26 "No, it's a lot of work, dad. And people don't help me." Which is
27 true. I know. I got three people right out there very good in
28 helping. And one is the chairperson for the Pukúu, which is

Exemption 6

1 (b) (6).

2 DC: Chairperson for what?

3 ROS: For the Pukú fundraiser we have. He's the chairperson, (b) (6)

4 (b) (6). He's very good at helping out in pow-wows. Also is Bill

5 Gonzales. He's one of the Senators. Who else? There was the

6 other one, but he's not here no more, he moved out. It was Bill. I

7 forgot now. He was married to my cousin that passed away. But

8 he hasn't been here for a year now.

9 DC: What happened to him? He just moved away?

10 ROS: He moved back east with his daughter. One of the daughters

11 lives up there. He moved over there. He was here a while back,

12 about three months ago.

13 DC: So he comes to visit.

14 ROS: He came to visit us. He came to visit the family and then he went

15 back.

16 DC: When you mean east, do you mean New England or just east?

17 ROS: No. Down to Indiana or some place up in that area that he moved

18 to with one of his daughters. The rest of the family lives up here.

19 Then we had our pow-wows at the Mission. And small pow-wows

20 afterwards. And Senator Alan Robbins came down.

21 DC: He's what? A state senator?

22 ROS: Uh-huh. Then he bought us the bear flag. We did a ceremony for

23 that at the Mission Park. And the people came down and they

24 brought in food, a special dish, everybody to share with all of us. I

25 couldn't afford to feed everybody so I just tell them. I said, I want

26 everybody to bring a special dish of anything you want. Bring it

27 down to the picnic and come to the Mission. Okay. And they

28 loved that. After that, they wanted a picnic every week. They

1 wanted a meeting every week just to bring the food.

2 DC: So is that how the meetings are organized now? People bring
3 some food.

4 ROS: That's why I organized it.

5 DC: So it's really sort of like a community then.

6 ROS: You'd be surprised at people who come during the summer. They
7 were ready for it. Then when the winter came, we'd go in and we
8 would try and get a hall. We got one in Pacoima there, that hall
9 there. And they brought the food in and we had a little lunch there
10 when we had our meeting. A mass meeting of all the people were
11 there. I just brought the people together all the time. But I try to
12 tell Rudy how to do it. He knows. But he's got so much work that
13 he can't do everything. I said, well, I know my people are ready to
14 go into it, come down. But later on maybe.

15 DC: Well, you still hold an annual event? And some quarterly events?
16 And then the Senate meets every month?

17 ROS: Yeah. And we have the Christmas events. We have a picnic
18 during the summer also.

19 DC: Is that an annual picnic?

20 ROS: Uh-huh. Yeah.

21 DC: And then you have Christmas.

22 ROS: Yeah. Christmas for the children.

23 DC: And that's a community event.

24 ROS: Uh-huh.

25 DC: And then do you have these quarterly meetings or something?

26 ROS: They have the meetings every month.

27 DC: Every month.

28 ROS: Yeah.

1 DC: Oh, so when the Senate meets, it's a potluck. It's everybody.
2 ROS: Yeah.
3 DC: A lot of the tribes in this area, they have what they call a general
4 council. But that's not exactly how you guys are organized.
5 ROS: No.
6 DC: You guys have the Senate, Senate Board.
7 ROS: We have a Senate. And we have a non-profit board.
8 DC: The Senate is how many members?
9 ROS: Right now I think there's supposed to be nine.
10 DC: Nine members when it's full.
11 ROS: Yeah.
12 DC: And they're elected how often?
13 ROS: They're elected every two or four years.
14 DC: Two or four years?
15 ROS: Uh-huh.
16 DC: The chief. How does that work? You're elected?
17 ROS: Me?
18 DC: Yeah.
19 ROS: I'm elected by the people at large.
20 DC: And how often is that election?
21 ROS: Every four years.
22 DC: But you've been repeat elected every time.
23 ROS: So far. [LAUGHS]
24 DC: So far.
25 ROS: So far. Well you see, the funny part is, my people, when I started
26 doing the history of my people, then they asked my people what
27 tribe are you from? "I don't know. Ask my cousin Rudy. He
28 knows. He's the one that did all the work for us." And I had one

1 cousin that lives way up in Canoga Park and he called one day. I
2 said, "Hello, cousin. How are you? You want something. What
3 do you want?" He said, "Well, one of my boys is going to school
4 and he told the teacher he was Indian and they asked him what
5 kind. He said he didn't know. So he asked me. And I said I don't
6 know. Why don't you call your cousin Rudy?" So they called me.
7 "I figured you wanted something, otherwise you wouldn't never
8 call me." They never call me unless they need something, the
9 information. So I says, "What do you need?" He says, "What
10 tribe are we from?" [LAUGHS] So I tell him. I said write it down.
11 He said, yeah, I'll write it down. But they don't do it. The people,
12 they just leave everything for one that knows everything. And
13 that's what's happened. And that's no good.

14 DC: Right, it's not.

15 ROS: Because once I leave, who's gonna answer their questions?

16 DC: Well, sometimes these community meetings are good places to
17 spread knowledge, because somebody has to get up and say a
18 few words and stuff and recount a few things and stuff.

19 ROS: Right. But then you try to get them up there. The only way you
20 get them is to say we've got some money that they sent us.
21 We're going to divide it. So you people, if you want money, you
22 better come to the office. They'll sleep overnight on the floor, until
23 morning when the door opens up, to get their money. Oh yes!
24 [LAUGHS] It's like everything else, you know.

25 DC: Uh-huh.

26 ROS: But that's it. And I tell them. I says, "Listen, we had the meeting
27 when I gave the papers to all my people, over 500 people at the
28 Mission, when I bound everything together in a package. I made

1 copies of all the papers." Imagine how much money I spent
2 making copies for everybody. And I gave them all out at the
3 Mission. I says, "Here's the papers. This is what you are. You're
4 Fernandeño. And your papers, you've got to send them to
5 Sacramento to the Bureau of Indian Affairs." That was in 1968.
6 September 27, I believe, was the last day of the enrollment in
7 Sacramento for the \$29.5 million.

8 DC: Yeah, that was part of the land grant.

9 ROS: The land grant, yeah. I got everything ready and I gave them
10 those papers.

11 DC: So you had 500 people?

12 ROS: Uh-huh.

13 DC: That you gave to so they could register? Did they all do that?

14 ROS: They all registered.

15 DC: So there should be 500 people on that 1968 roll?

16 ROS: There should.

17 DC: Did you ever keep a list of that group?

18 ROS: There were a couple that didn't send in their papers and then
19 three days later, one of my first cousins.... Now, listen to this.
20 One of my first cousins, I talked to him and I said, "Send the
21 papers." "Oh, no. It's too much bother, cousin." I says, "Why?"
22 Well, he had 12 kids then. He said, "Oh, I've got to go get their
23 birth certificates. I've got to go find out where they're at. Ah, too
24 much bother." Three days later, when he heard that there was
25 going to be money given out, he came to me and said, "Cousin, I
26 want to register." "You're too late. You're three days too late.
27 You can't do it." "Oh, come on, cousin, you know the people up
28 there. You can do it." I says, "No, I don't. Even if I know the

y

1 people, I said, they would not break the laws. I'm sorry. You're
2 out on it." And he was out. And everybody got \$781 in 1971 on
3 that money. And he was out on all that money for 12 kids. But he
4 wouldn't listen. Now he's registered with us. But all the kids are
5 married. His wife just passed away a couple of years ago.

6 DC: When the Senate and the community comes together to meet,
7 what kind of business do you guys transact? What's the usual
8 kind of thing?

9 ROS: Different businesses, whatever they have comes up to the office
10 here. They discuss, for instance, we have a bookstore. They
11 broke into it Saturday.

12 DC: This is a bookstore that's owned by the tribe?

13 ROS: By the tribe.

14 DC: What's the name of it? Is this at Wheeler? No.

15 ROS: That's the one Rudy has here in San Fernando.

16 DC: Do you remember the name?

17 ROS: No. I don't know what name they put.

18 DC: So you guys have this bookstore which is a community business.

19 ROS: It's a community business and the money goes to Pukúu.

20 DC: How do you spell Pukúu?

21 ROS: It's P-U-K-U-U.

22 DC: What's this name? You guys started using this. I don't remember
23 this before. Pukúu. What does that name mean? Because I
24 don't remember using it a couple of years ago.

25 ROS: That's for the non-profit board.

26 DC: Oh, that's the non-profit board. Okay. So that's the non-profit that
27 you organized under state law.

28 ROS: Yeah. And we had our first break-in Saturday morning. At three

1 o'clock in the morning.

2 DC: So the bookstore is that. And the business of the Evening with
3 the Stars is all organized by Pukúu then.

4 ROS: That's for the scholarship.

5 DC: It's also organized now by the non-profit.

6 ROS: By the non-profit. Yeah.

7 DC: So the Senate is a separate entity now.

8 ROS: Right. The Senate is the working business.

9 DC: Is the working business. What do you mean by that? Or just the
10 business of the community?

11 ROS: Just the business of the community. When they have any
12 problems, they bring it up to the Board, the Senate Board.

13 DC: Do you guys have this written up or adopted or anything like that?
14 Like Robert's Rules of Order where you write it up like little by-
15 laws or constitution or something like that?

16 ROS: Yeah. Rudy has those. Actually, he's in charge on both boards.
17 He goes to those meetings. I don't take to them. He brings
18 everything back to me. We have a meeting on a Tuesday, him
19 and the chairperson for the Senate, we meet on a Tuesday every
20 month.

21 DC: Do you remember when these by-laws were adopted?

22 ROS: No, I don't.

23 DC: Was that before your time?

24 ROS: No, no. It was just adopted not too long ago.

25 DC: Okay. So 1990s or something.

26 ROS: About a couple of years ago or so.

27 DC: Okay. So you're talking about 2000s.

28 ROS: Yeah, something like that.

1 DC: But what about the time before then?
2 ROS: Before that, we had the by-laws were adopted back in 1973.
3 DC: A different set of bylaws?
4 ROS: Yeah.
5 DC: And then in '48, '49, when you started to reorganize things, there
6 were bylaws then?
7 ROS: They were the same bylaws.
8 DC: So '72, '73, you just wrote them down then? Or what happened?
9 ROS: Yeah.
10 DC: But the rules....
11 ROS: In '73, that's when we submitted the bylaws.
12 DC: And submitted those to what?
13 ROS: Actually, Senator Alan Robbins walked it through the offices in
14 Sacramento to be approved.
15 DC: To be state recognized, right?
16 ROS: Uh-huh. Yeah. I have those papers.
17 DC: Okay. We don't need to see them now, but eventually we want to
18 have copies of them. Before then....
19 ROS: Before then, we had the bylaws. Because we had just started in
20 the forties.
21 DC: Right. Okay. So did you write bylaws back then?
22 ROS: Actually, they were writing bylaws but they didn't finish it until
23 1973.
24 DC: Okay. So you were discussing bylaws.
25 ROS: Yeah. And then we'd had the meeting and they'd come up with
26 something else. They'd change it. Back and forth, back and forth.
27 So I didn't push them too much because they were taking the
28 time. Actually, they didn't know what they were doing, and they

1 were thinking. And I didn't want to push them because then
2 they'd quit on me.

3 DC: Right. I know.

4 ROS: They wouldn't come back no more. I know my people.

5 DC: Sound like Indian folks.

6 ROS: So I had to keep them together. So I let them do whatever time
7 they needed until the time came when they told me. I said I had
8 the attorney right there in Pacoima at Legal Services. They're the
9 ones that made the papers up for me, filled out all the documents
10 for me to send.

11 DC: So it wasn't until '73 that they finally adopted. But you had an
12 election or something like that.

13 ROS: Right. And when I was there in the office there in Pacoima under
14 the Department of Social Services, I had an Indian group. I think
15 it was a Navajo. The ladies came down and they went to the
16 Legal Services there. They wanted the papers filled out because
17 they wanted to get their money from their tribe. It was just about
18 five words on that document that they wanted to fill out and the
19 attorney there didn't want to touch it. He was afraid to touch it
20 because Native American, you know. The laws. So, he said, I'll
21 tell you what. Go next door. There's an Indian tribe there. They
22 probably can help you. That's when they came to me. And I filled
23 it out for them and I sent them back on their way. And then
24 afterwards I seen the lady again and I asked her did you get your
25 money. She said, "Oh yeah, thank you very much. We got our
26 money." Whatever I did, whatever I signed, I did right and they
27 got their money. They were happy. I used to get people like that.
28 Actually, I serviced more the Hispanic people than our own people

1 there at the office. Because they call to the Department of Social
2 Service there and they say, oh, Victor. The Spanish people say,
3 no, no, I don't want to talk to you people. Can I talk to the Indian
4 people better? They figured that with us they'd get faster service.
5 And with them they wouldn't. They would send them back home,
6 come back, and back and forth. Bounce them back and forth.
7 They figured with us if we sent them out they'd get right away their
8 needs that they needed. Which we did. We used to send them
9 out to different locations in Pacoima where they'd feed them,
10 they'd give them food, clothing, furniture. I had a book of where
11 they could go all the time and get stuff.

12 DC: You guys get this grant through the self-governance board or the
13 commission and stuff. Does that run through Pukúu? Does a
14 grant that you get through the commission, the self-governance
15 board, the L.A.D. commission

16 ROS: Rudy knows about that. I don't.

17 DC: But how is that organized for you guys? It's under Pukúu now?
18 Or is it under the tribe?

19 ROS: You know, I really don't know. I really don't know because some
20 of that stuff they don't tell me and I don't ask them, because I let
21 them worry about it. I've got enough to do.

22 DC: That's just an administrative thing.

23 ROS: Yeah.

24 DC: Tell me about the late forties when you came back. You didn't
25 really adopt bylaws right away, but you had some way in which
26 people would conduct business. How did you do that?

27 ROS: They would come to us when we had our meetings.

28 DC: So even then you had these monthly meetings.

1 ROS: Yeah. We started our meetings again after the war. We started
2 right away getting our people together. They knew when I was
3 back. They knew nothing happened to me so they used to call my
4 mother up and ask. Well, he's not here. He just left. Because I
5 was married already.

6 DC: So in a certain sense they were waiting for you to come back?

7 ROS: They were waiting for me.

8 DC: Why was that? Because you were the hereditary chief? What's
9 the deal?

10 ROS: I guess. That's when my father had passed on.

11 DC: Your father was the captain before.

12 ROS: Yeah. My grandfather and then my father took over.

13 DC: And your grandfather was a captain in his days.

14 ROS: Yeah. Until he got sick and then he.... So then after that, my
15 aunt says, "Come on, Rudy, let's form something. I need
16 something to where I can go out and enjoy and talk to people." I
17 said, "Okay." So that's what I did. We formed a group and after
18 the war, when I come back, they said, come on, let's get the
19 people. They're ready. They've been waiting for you to come
20 back. I says okay. So we started doing the meetings again and
21 started getting the Board together.

22 DC: How did you conduct the meetings at the beginning since you
23 didn't have bylaws? Nobody really cared perhaps.

24 ROS: No. They didn't want no bylaws. They wanted to work just as
25 they come in and discuss the problems.

26 DC: That's the way that they always had done it.

27 ROS: Yeah. And in those years back, they didn't have no laws. They
28 conducted their meetings. You know how they were, the chiefs.

1 Ha! Whatever the chief said, good, it went. But we told them the
2 bylaws and all that but they said, oh, let's wait. We don't know
3 what's going to happen later on up ahead. Let's see what
4 happens.

5 DC: So nobody thought it was all that important at the beginning to
6 have them, because there were certain ways of doing things
7 already that people were happy with.

8 ROS: Yeah. And they agreed with most of the stuff. If they didn't agree,
9 they'd talk it over and they'd come out to some solution.
10 Otherwise, they carried it for the coming month.

11 DC: So in some sense it was by consensus then.

12 ROS: Uh-huh.

13 DC: People talked until they got agreement. And if you didn't get
14 agreement, they just deferred.

15 ROS: They put it on for the next month. And at the end, they'd come up
16 with some kind of an agreement.

17 DC: Was that the way they did it in the twenties and thirties too? Do
18 you think very much?

19 ROS: I imagine. I imagine they did.

20 DC: So that was sort of the thing that people were used to.

21 ROS: Yeah. I imagine that's how they did it.

22 DC: Did they have a name back in those days? A specific name they
23 called themselves?

24 ROS: Not that I can remember.

25 DC: See, because that's one of the things we have to try to do, is to try
26 to get people to identify them. So they conducted business, they
27 took care of internal matters. But did they do any other? Talk to
28 the city, talk to the state, talk to the government. That's the kind

1 of thing that you can get.

2 ROS: You know, I don't think they did any of that, to tell you the truth,
3 because I was the only one that was contacting the BIA in
4 Sacramento.

5 DC: Even in the seventies?

6 ROS: Yeah. Well, actually when I started in the forties. And I used to
7 call them too. Actually, after this \$29.5 million that they awarded
8 for the land, about 15 years later I called the Bureau of Indian
9 Affairs in Sacramento. And I asked them that my people wanted
10 to know when they was going to be out some more money. That
11 was 15 years after. They said we don't know. We don't have no
12 land right now so we don't know when, if there is any money on
13 that land, whatever land we have. But we don't know right now
14 anything. He says, what we'll do is we'll transfer to Washington,
15 the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the office over there. And they
16 transferred me from their phone so I didn't have to pay the bill.
17 And I talked to them over there. They said, no, we don't have no
18 land right now, so there's not going to be no money. As far as we
19 know, that's it. I said, okay, thank you. My people wanted to
20 know. So that was it. I told my people and they were kind of a
21 little unhappy about it but there was nothing they could do about it.
22 So they said there was no more land to give money out to.

23 DC: But they ended up coming in '68 again with another one of those
24 land settlement things. Right?

25 ROS: Yeah. In '68. Uh-huh.

26 DC: So from the point of view of the community, what was the whole
27 purpose of reorganizing? Just to carry on tradition?

28 ROS: Just to carry on where my ancestors left off. Well, actually, also,

1 like I said, my blood was boiling over as an Indian and I wanted to
2 see what my ancestors did back in those days, if I could pick up
3 any of the information. Which it was too late because a lot of our
4 forefathers had passed on without giving the information to the
5 rest of the families.

6 DC: Were there other chiefs in the community? Other captains in the
7 community?

8 ROS: Not that I know of.

9 DC: So there's really only one captain?

10 ROS: One captain. Yeah.

11 DC: And everyone recognized that that line was to you.

12 ROS: Yeah.

13 DC: There was some guy named Rocha or something that was big.
14 Was he related to you somehow? You're not a direct descendant
15 of him or anything like that, this guy Rocha?

16 ROS: No. I don't think so.

17 DC: So the line was with him at one time and then it changed over?

18 ROS: It changed over.

19 DC: Do you remember how that happened?

20 ROS: No. But then the way I figure it is because my grandfather knew
21 the language and he was one of the three Indians that knew the
22 language. And I guess he was the last one to stay behind until
23 1942 or '43 when he passed on.

24 DC: So he was a type of survivor.

25 ROS: Uh-huh.

26 DC: And he knew the language and knew lots of cultural stuff.

27 ROS: Right. Uh-huh.

28 DC: So he was sort of a cultural leader.

1 ROS: Yeah. But what makes me mad is that he never told us nothing.
2 That's the thing that I couldn't figure out. All my people, the elders
3 that passed on, has never talked to their family about how they
4 lived back in those days, which that's interesting to me. I would
5 like to know.

6 DC: I know. And hear it straight.

7 ROS: But I can't get nowhere. I run to get-ins after that person dies.
8 And the family says, well, we don't know. My father never told us
9 anything about it. Or my mother never told us nothing. We don't
10 know where we came from. It was a black screen. They never
11 mentioned nothing. They were afraid I guess.

12 DC: Do you have any idea who were the captains during the twenties
13 and thirties?

14 ROS: No.

15 DC: Would anyone know anywhere? Would that be written down
16 anywhere?

17 ROS: I don't think so. There might be. I don't know if there might be
18 something, but then I'm not sure. But I know none of my family
19 knows. Because my family when now they're my age, and they
20 didn't know nothing at that time when we were young.

21 DC: But you remember the festivals and things.

22 ROS: They always referred it to me.

23 DC: When you got to be old enough. When did you start taking on that
24 job? Even before you went to the war? Or after the war?

25 ROS: In 1941.

26 DC: So already before the war, you were already serving as captain.

27 ROS: Yeah.

28 DC: In a certain sense, how did that happen to you? Was it that your

1 father died?

2 ROS: My father passed on and my people just said you're the captain.
3 You're the leader.

4 DC: And do you remember things that your father did?

5 ROS: Really, my father worked most of the time.

6 DC: He was trying to make a living most of the time.

7 ROS: He worked as a caretaker up here in Tujunga.

8 DC: Oh, so you followed in his footsteps.

9 ROS: Yeah. He mostly worked for a living. In them days we didn't get
10 much money. So I got out of school at the age of 15 and went to
11 part-time school on Saturdays. Because otherwise Lockheed,
12 when I got hired in, I had to keep on going to school. But I told
13 them I had got out of school but I was going to part-time school.
14 They said, well, you have to go on Saturdays and you have to
15 bring me the report the next day that you went to school. They
16 were monitoring to make sure that I was going to school. That's
17 when I went to keep my job at Lockheed. Because I was one of
18 the top riveters.

19 DC: This was during the war.

20 ROS: Well, just at the start of the war, before I went in. I was a riveter
21 for the B-38s, the bombers.

22 DC: B-27s. The 48s were much later. There's B-27s, there's B-29s,
23 B-24s.

24 ROS: B-38s.

25 DC: B-38s. Oh, okay.

26 ROS: Yeah. B-38s. They were the bombers and after that
27 constellations came in, after the 38s at Lockheed Aircraft.
28 Actually, Lockheed was Vega then in the thirties. It was Vega.

1 And the other one was Lockheed. They were Lockheed and Vega
2 and they were both brothers. So Lockheed Brothers they brought
3 Vega Brothers out and they made it all Lockheed back when I got
4 back out of the war in 1948. Then after that Lockheed bought
5 Vega out and made it all Lockheed.

6 DC: Did your father ever talk about your grandfather being captain at
7 one point or anything?

8 ROS: No. Like I said, they never talked about the family background,
9 what they did, they danced, and they dressed with their regalias.

10 DC: They actually did.

11 ROS: And they never talked about that. That's what makes me mad.

12 DC: But they did do it.

13 ROS: Oh yeah. Yeah, they did dress. But they never talked about it.

14 DC: So you actually saw the performances and stuff like that.

15 ROS: Yeah.

16 DC: They sang bird songs and stuff like that?

17 ROS: You know I never heard them singing bird songs. But I guess
18 they did, some of them did sing the bird songs.

19 DC: Who was organizing the community events in those days then?
20 Your father was involved with that or other people were involved
21 with that?

22 ROS: It was my father and other people. They'd come together.

23 DC: Did they have the monthly meetings still or did they have other
24 meetings or other festivals?

25 ROS: Well, they had festivals. They had meetings. But I don't know
26 when their meetings were. I was still small.

27 DC: Yeah. Any idea what business they transacted, the issues they
28 were involved in?

1 ROS: No. I don't.

2 DC: It was a long time ago.

3 ROS: Yeah. It was too long ago. And now, that I'm up my age, I forget
4 a lot of things. If you would have talked to me in 1950, I mean say
5 ten years ago when I was 70, I probably would have think more.
6 But my mind goes out. To tell you the truth, my driver's license
7 expires on the 12th of December, my birthday next week. And I've
8 been meaning to go after my driver's license. So my wife called
9 me and said did you go and get your driver's license? I haven't
10 gone yet. I will go this afternoon. So I went yesterday. I walked
11 in, paid them the \$27, and they give me the test. And the lady
12 says, you don't do this side; just do the other side, 18 questions,
13 that's all you do. Okay. I says, that's easy. So I started doing it.
14 I missed one.

15 DC: That's good.

16 ROS: Oh boy, I came out happy, grinning. But them people didn't know
17 why. I was going like this. I got my driver's license for another
18 five years. And I got to wait for it, but I got a permit to show that I
19 applied for it in time. So when I go to Mexico to rent my car, I've
20 got a name. Going back to my father, I don't know what they did,
21 how they did it, or anything. I was small then.

22 DC: But you knew they did it though.

23 ROS: Yeah. With Rudy, when he was born, he was five years old, he
24 was stuck to me. He wanted to go to the meetings with me. I said
25 boring, but he went with me. He never cried, he never bugged me
26 or nothing.

27 DC: But he listened.

28 ROS: He stayed there and he just listened.

1 DC: And learned.

2 ROS: It's not like he understood the big talk of the men and the women.
3 He didn't. But he wanted to be there. That's how he got up where
4 he's at. I'm proud of him. Now the other boys, I says, "Well, you
5 see what your brother?" "Dad, let him be. He knows more than
6 we do. We don't know nothing, he does. He's been with you all
7 the time in the meetings and all that. We were busy working. So
8 let him be the leader." And then Stevie, one of the Senate, he told
9 my wife, "Mom, I hope we can get federally recognized and get
10 some casino going on or something before my dad goes. I know
11 he'd be happy to see it." I told my wife, "Is that what he said?
12 Wait till he gets over here to the house one of these days. I'm
13 going to slap him one."

14 [LAUGHTER]

15 ROS: See what they're already thinking about. They're working hard
16 trying to get going before I leave. That's been my dream way
17 back. To get my people federally recognized as a tribe. We are
18 federally recognized as a group, individual. But not as a tribe.
19 And that's what I've been trying to do. Get us a tribe so we can
20 have more power. In case we find any burial sites, we can stop it.
21 We do a little aid with it sometimes. But it's hard.

22 DC: Yeah. For a non-recognized group, it's hard.

23 ROS: Yeah. Unless we're federally recognized. I'm happy that a lot of
24 these big shots that own the property that they dig, like Newhall
25 Ranch, they listen to us and they stop. That's okay.

26 DC: You were talking before I remember about, is the Newhall Ranch
27 some of your traditional territory that you had? Or you said that
28 the Lennar Company had taken over some of your property that

1 you had before. Old patents or something like that. Was it the
2 Newhall Ranch that was part of your territory that was taken away
3 after the 1850s? I can't remember.

4 ROS: Oh no. That's the cabin here in San Fernando. That's the one on
5 Hubbard and Fourth Street.

6 DC: But there's land. I don't know if you know this history. But in
7 theory, after the Mexicans took over in the 1820s, they were
8 supposed to distribute the land to the Indians. But I'm not sure
9 that they ever really did.

10 ROS: Oh, the Mexicans.

11 DC: Yeah. They were supposed to do that.

12 ROS: They never did.

13 DC: They never did. Yeah. They never did anywhere. So a lot of the
14 Mexicans and got the land and then left the Indians with very little.

15 ROS: Right. And some without it.

16 DC: Yeah.

17 ROS: Just like the three Indians at the Mission that Rudy was telling you
18 about. When the missionaries came down, they seen that the
19 San Fernando Mission was richer with land than the one in
20 Encino. So they gave the three Indians the Encino land for the
21 Mission land. So they sent them over there. But over there, there
22 was a squatter already by the name of Tiburcio.

23 DC: Say his name again. How do you spell that?

24 ROS: Tiburcio. T-U-... ohhhh.

25 DC: I'll just try it. T-U-B-U-S-I-O. Close.

26 ROS: I guess. You'll find it.

27 DC: We probably have a document.

28 ROS: He was a squatter there. Actually, Tiburcio his wife was Pola.

1 And they were the ones that were squatting there. But the three
2 Indians that left here for over there, two married of them married
3 two of the daughters from there, from that Tiburcio. And one of
4 them was my great-great-grandmother, Rita. Actually, her father
5 married one of the daughters. And her father's name was
6 Francisco Papabubaba.

7 DC: Was that a Tataviam name?

8 ROS: Yeah. And he had a daughter named Rita. But the thing is, see,
9 that Rita we thought was going to be Rita Papabubaba before she
10 married. But she married and she married under Rita Alipas. She
11 had three sons. One was Antonio, which was my grandfather.
12 And I found that birth certificate under Ortega. That's my
13 grandfather. The other one was his brother. And his mother's
14 name was Hipas, with an H.

15 DC: H-I-P-A-S?

16 ROS: Uh-huh. And then the other brother, his mother's last name was
17 Lipas. So there's three different names on the birth certificates of
18 those three children.

19 DC: That's confusing.

20 ROS: And I thought the other Rita, which was Rita de la Osa, was my
21 great-great-grandmother. But no. Because she was married to
22 Vincent de la Osa from Mexico. So I said, no, that's not it. So I
23 kept on digging and digging until I found I finally found Antonio
24 that had a Rita mother. And I said that's her. And she was
25 married to Fernando Ortega.

26 DC: And Fernando Ortega was a Spanish guy or a Mexican or
27 something?

28 ROS: We don't know. Because this was owned by Mexico. And

1 according to the records that I have, it says that he was born in
2 Sonora, Mexico. So I sent a letter to Sonora for a baptism or
3 something and they sent me the check back. I thought they were
4 going to cash it and keep it. You know how they do that over
5 there in Mexico. They sent me the check back and a letter stating
6 that they wanted more information on him. In other words, they
7 wanted the mother and father, because they said they had four
8 Ortegases on Fernando.

9 DC: Oh I see.

10 ROS: And they wanted to know which of the Fernando Ortegases is the
11 one.

12 DC: But you didn't know that.

13 ROS: I didn't get the rest of the information. All I had is just that. And
14 the death records is with Pierce Brothers in Los Angeles on Pico
15 Street. That I found out. I did a lot of research and I finally found
16 it. And the girl says, well, if you need it, just go to the Hall of
17 Records and you can get a copy of it. It's registered there. But
18 the records they were given to Pierce Brothers by—what's the
19 name of the funeral home that used to do the burials in San
20 Fernando in the 1800s? Conners? There my mind goes. I forgot
21 the first name of the funeral home that used to bury them. Right
22 here behind the Holy Cross is a cemetery. There's where my
23 great-great grandmother is buried. She was buried in 1902, under
24 that funeral home. I didn't ask for her. And I'm sure that Pierce
25 Brothers has that book too because they found that one. So I'm
26 sure that they had that one too. But I never went over to try and
27 get the records on that. But they have them. So you can check
28 on that and get the baptismal or death certificate. Find out if

1 there's a mother and father listed on that, because I couldn't get
2 nothing else from them. Whether he was from over there or he
3 was from here because this was then Mexico territory.
4 DC: Right.
5 ROS: It's just like my great-great-grandfather from Sonoma, California.
6 DC: Sonoma.
7 ROS: Yeah. According to it, he came from there. And he landed in
8 Littlerock Palmdale. And he built his first house out of adobe. He
9 was the first one, Indian, to build a ranch out of adobe. And with
10 my great-great-grandmother. My grandmother was born there in
11 Littlerock dam in 18....
12 DC: The grandmother on the other side.
13 ROS: Isadora Garcia.
14 DC: Say that again for me.
15 ROS: Littlerock Palmdale.
16 DC: No. Your grandmother's name.
17 ROS: Who? My grandfather?
18 DC: Grandmother.
19 ROS: Oh, grandmother?
20 DC: Yeah.
21 ROS: Isadora.
22 DC: I don't know how to spell that.
23 ROS: I-S-A-D-O-R-A. And her brother was named Isadoro.
24 DC: And the last name? Garcia?
25 ROS: Garcia. And her father was Santiago Garcia. They named the
26 road in Acton under him. Santiago Garcia Canyon Road. Acton
27 was not Acton in the 1800s. It was named Santiago. It was a
28 little, little name on the head of a pin on a map. I have it here

1 somewhere. In one of the books I found it. I've been looking for it
2 again and I can't find it. I want to get a copy of it and make a
3 copy. So when people tell me, I say I'm not lying. They think I'm
4 lying and I'll show them, here. Look, here it is. It's in one of the
5 books that Rudy has in the office here. Back in the old days, we
6 used to do parties with weddings and baptisms and fifteen-year-
7 old-girls parties.

8 DC: Oh what do they call those? I forget what they call them. That's a
9 Mexican tradition, isn't it?

10 ROS: Yeah.

11 DC: They call it...?

12 ROS: Quinceñera.

13 DC: Yeah. Right.

14 ROS: They still do it. The Indians did that after the Spanish came in and
15 conquered them and had to do it their way. It's a celebration. So
16 that's how they got it. My mother was born in Whittier. My
17 grandmother was born in Whittier. The whole family was born in
18 Whittier, but yet one of the women came from way back down
19 Mexico City, way back in the 1700s. Rudy says he found it on the
20 internet. [LAUGHS] But the rest of this family here was born here
21 in the 1800s.

22 DC: What were people doing over at Whittier? Were they just living
23 there or what? Whittier is kind of like a Quaker town, isn't it?

24 ROS: Yeah.

25 DC: They weren't over there for...?

26 ROS: Yeah, my grandmother, the funeral home there on Montebello on
27 Tenth Street and Whittier Boulevard, that funeral home there
28 buried her in Rose Hill. She's buried out there. She was born in

1 Whittier. And my mother was born in Whittier.

2 DC: Tell me a little bit about the BIA, meaning what kind of interactions
3 and issues did you try to deal with those guys? Do you remember
4 anything before? What do the Bureau officials? There's a
5 southern office here and I saw you had some correspondence
6 with them. I saw some of it already.

7 ROS: Oh. Yeah. They have an office there and now that's by
8 Riverside.

9 DC: Yeah. Right.

10 ROS: Riverside. You know, I went there once. I want to in fact mention
11 that. I want to tell you a story about that. I went there once. I
12 was looking for some records and not getting anywhere. And I
13 thought it was in Escondido. I went to Escondido and I couldn't
14 find it. So I went to a restaurant there and I had breakfast. And I
15 asked them if they knew where the Bureau of Indian Affairs was
16 around here in Escondido. "Oh no, it's over in Riverside." "Oh,
17 Riverside?" "Yeah." I said, "Okay, thank you." I had breakfast
18 and I took off to Riverside from there, from Escondido. I got there
19 to the office, I walked in, and went to the reception there. She
20 waited and then she came in. I says, "I'd like to talk to the head
21 man or head woman that's here." She said, "Who are you?" I
22 says, "My name is Rudy Ortega and I'm a Mission Indian of San
23 Fernando." She said, "Well, you know, you have to have an
24 appointment to see anybody." I says, "Why? I don't see nobody
25 here but me. I'm the only one in this lobby right now. So why do I
26 have to have an appointment?" I says, "Have you publicized it
27 that we have to have an appointment to come and see this office
28 here?" She didn't say nothing. "Well, let me see if they can see

1 you." So she went back and talked to the head sancho there.
2 There's a woman. So she came back and said, "They'll see you
3 in a minute. Okay?" So I went and sat down. As soon as I sat
4 down, they called me. So I walked in and I went through all the
5 little offices on both sides. And these women were sitting down,
6 coffee, coffee, that one on the phone talking. And then I got there,
7 I asked the lady, oh yeah, I wanted some information on one of
8 my cousins. I says, "Excuse me, but you know up in the front
9 office, you have to have an appointment to come and see
10 somebody in here." She says, "Yeah. Why?" I said, "Why?" I
11 said, "I was the only one in the lobby and these people on the
12 offices here, they're drinking coffee and one's on the phone
13 shooting the breeze. Why do I have to have an appointment?"
14 "Oh, I'm sorry. I'm sorry, mister. No, no. That's alright. We're
15 here now. You can talk to me and see what you need." How
16 should I say it? I'm very polite in a way, but I throw it to them right
17 to their face. I don't talk behind their back. Never have to
18 anybody. I always tell them what I think about them to their faces.
19 So she says, "Okay, how can I help you?" So I told her I wanted
20 to have a copy of my cousin's family tree if they have anything.
21 "Let me check." So she did. And she said the only thing I have is
22 this paper. She gave me a copy of it and it said that Mary Garcia
23 is registered as a Mission Indian of San Fernando. And my
24 cousins, her sons, they were going under Chumash. But one of
25 them was under Mission Indian and he was my treasurer, when I
26 first started the organization, back in the forties. So, I says,
27 "Okay. Could I have this copy?" She says, "Yeah. What are you
28 trying to do?" I said, "Well, I'm trying to see if I can get federally

1 recognized some day." She said, "Why don't you? All you need
2 is two people, three people to get federally recognized." I says,
3 "Yeah? Not the way it looks now."

4 [LAUGHTER]

5 DC: That might have been the mixed blood method way back then.

6 ROS: Huh?

7 DC: That must have been the mixed blood path. We were talking a
8 little bit about that the other day. But that was way back then. It's
9 harder now.

10 ROS: I said to myself. Boy, I should have started then. Maybe I'll do it
11 as she said.

12 DC: I'm sorry. The half-blood method. That's what they called it.

13 ROS: I said maybe I'll try some day. And then I said to myself, maybe I
14 should have now. But yeah, that was a time that I went down
15 there and I almost walked out without seeing anybody, but I said,
16 no, no, no. This is too much. I've got to tell them what I think. I
17 says, there's nobody here, there's nobody here that has an
18 appointment. I said, you have an appointment? Oh, nobody's
19 there. You have an appointment? Oh, nobody's there. So how
20 do I have to have an appointment? I said, and I come from San
21 Fernando. It's a long ways. And to sit here and wait maybe three
22 days. I'll sit here and wait three days if I have to, to get an
23 appointment. No, let me see if they'll see you somebody. Nobody
24 was doing nothing. Not even the big sancho was doing nothing.
25 But it was just a formality that you had to have. I said I never
26 seen it publicized anywhere. Not even in the newspaper pony.

27 DC: So how did they treat you? They treated you as an unrecognized
28 tribe then. They didn't talk to you about having any sort of

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relationship with them.

ROS: But they see me. It's just like when I called Washington for the Bureau of Indian Affairs. I wanted to talk to somebody there. I says, "I'm calling collect." "Oh, I can't accept collect calls." "I'm sorry," I said, "but I'm the chief of the tribe in San Fernando, California and I want to talk to somebody here." "Well, he just stepped out. I think he's at a meeting." "Okay, I'll call back." I called back an hour and a half later. He said, "Oh, he just stepped out." I said, "What? Did he forget his cup of coffee? I'll wait until he gets back again." And so I waited. So I guess she said, "Okay, yeah, he'll accept the call." I said, "They have to."

[LAUGHS]

[KNOCKING]

ROS: Come in.

[FEMALE TALKING, INAUDIBLE]

DC: Let's go to lunch too. And then we'll come back.

[END TAPE 1]